



# Fife Child Protection Committee

## Annual Report 2022-2023

CPC Independent Chair



## Preface from Chief Officers

Welcome to the Fife Child Protection Committee Annual Report for 2022-2023.

Building on the solid foundation laid in the previous year, we are pleased to present this report, highlighting our continued commitment to ensuring the safety, well-being, and protection of children in Fife.

We are delighted to introduce the new Child Protection Committee leadership team Chair, Dougie Dunlop. His background and experience in safeguarding children are assets that will undoubtedly guide us as we continue our vital work. We warmly welcome him and look forward to the fresh perspectives he will bring to our mission.

We are pleased to report that the partnership has made significant strides in recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. The dedication and resilience of our team, in collaboration with our partners and the wider community, have played a pivotal role in this success. As we look back on the challenges faced during the pandemic, we also celebrate the triumphs in protecting the well-being of our children, laying the groundwork for a brighter future.

This report highlights the achievements of our staff and Committee during this timeframe and outlines our strategic plans and priorities for the forthcoming year. With the recent appointment of a new chair and other senior leadership changes, we are poised to further enhance our efforts in child protection.


We are happy to present this report and look forward to the opportunities and challenges that the year ahead will bring. Together, we will continue to make Fife the best place in Scotland for children to thrive and flourish.



Ken Gourlay  
Chief Executive  
Fife Council



Derek McEwan  
Divisional Commander  
'P' Division Police Scotland



Carol Potter  
Chief Executive  
NHS Fife



## Foreword from the Independent Chair

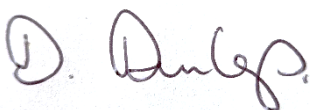
I am pleased to take up my position as the new independent Chair for Fife's Child Protection Committee as from June 2023. I would like to begin my comments by acknowledging the significant work of my predecessor who steered the committee over a significant number of years.

This report summarises the key activities of the Committee for 2022/23, a period when partner agencies took the opportunity to take stock of the key development challenges facing Child Protection Committees across Scotland. This has resulted in a number of changes to how the work of CPC in Fife is shaped as it puts itself in the best position to meet these challenges. As part of this reshaping two new subgroups of the CPC were formed towards the end of the reporting period with the merging of the Data and Self Evaluation groups to become the Quality Assurance Group. A refocused Training subgroup was also established helping us respond to the development needs of staff right across the Partnership.

A significant area of activity in 22/23 has also been our work to implement the new national child protection guidance that was introduced in 2021 and was further updated this year. The committee has had the benefit of a subgroup dedicated to this area of activity. Through the work of this group, we have begun to develop guidance for staff in key practice areas and this will be subject to further important rollout in the coming period.

The adoption of the Scottish Child Interview Model has been a further significant development, and the report highlights some of the key positives that have come from this including extremely valuable and comprehensive feedback from the children and families who have been involved. Along with the work of the Case Review Working Group and our audit activity we have an increasingly strong understanding of the quality of our services and where we will target improvement activity in the future.

I hope this report is helpful in outlining the work of the committee over the last year and how this is feeding into our emerging priorities for the coming year.



Independent Chair  
Fife Child Protection Committee

## Contents

CONTENTS	PAGE NUMBER
<b>Vision, Values, Priorities, Role and Membership</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Our Work</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Structure Function and Overview</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Working Group Activity</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Case Review Working Group</i>	10
<i>Self-Evaluation and Improvement Working Group</i>	11
<i>Data Group</i>	12
<i>Training and Development</i>	13
<i>Guidance Implementation and Workforce Development Group</i>	14
<i>Scottish Child Interview Model</i>	15
<b>Key Statistics</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Priority Areas of Development</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Enquiries</b>	<b>21</b>

## Vision, Values, Priorities, Role and Membership

Fife Child Protection Committee (CPC) has a clear vision for all children in Fife to be safe and protected from harm. As a partnership, Fife's Child Protection Committee exists to develop, implement, and improve child protection strategy and thread child protection work through a wide range of local agencies and across the community. At the heart of this work is our vision, *"It's everyone's job to make sure I'm all right."*



**WE AIM** to see Fife's children achieve their full potential by providing a safe and supportive environment.

### OUR VALUES

We will:

- Treat children as individuals, considering any diversity.
- Ensure we use the least intrusive intervention needed.
- Hear children.
- Maximise the strengths within families and communities.



**OUR PRIORITIES** We will always consider the steps outlined in the 'Six for Safety' in all of our practice.

'Six for Safety' promotes best practice when working with children and families. Developed from analysis and learning from Learning Reviews, these are day-to-day best practice principles of working, to support and protect children and young people and support improved decision-making.

The needs of children are at the centre of all practice.



Ensuring that all relationships with children, parents/carers are effective, constructive and are central to improving wellbeing and minimise risk of harm.



All assessments and plans are effective in achieving outcomes in meeting needs and minimising risk of harm. All available resources, techniques and tools are used to best effect.



Relevant information is shared appropriately, clear lines of responsibility for action are understood across partners and communication is effective in minimising potential risks.



Early and effective intervention is achieved where possible, minimising the risk of harm to children and young people.



A culture of effective management support and/or supervision is embedded which embodies the values and principles of Fife Child Protection Committee.



## Context

On 30 June 2022, the population of Fife was 370,400<sup>1</sup>, making it the third-largest local authority in Scotland. It is located between the River Tay to the north and the River Forth to the south and has a mixture of urban and rural settlements. Two-thirds of people live in an urban setting, mainly in or near one of its three large towns: Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes.



Fife's population has increased by around 1% since 2011, and its actual population has been overestimated by approximately 4,300 people, making the new population figure. 370,400. Fife's Structure continues to change, with fewer children and working-aged people than in 2011 and a significant increase in its older population. In 2011, Fife had 60,100 children aged between 0 and 14 - 16.5% of the population. By 2022, this figure had reduced by 2,500 children to 57,600, 15.6% of the population.

In 2022-23, 49,621 children and young people were registered in Fife Council Primary or Secondary school provision.

A significant segment of the population experiences challenging financial and material circumstances. As a committee we recognise the indirect relationship between the impact of poverty and child abuse and Neglect.<sup>2</sup>

The Fife Child Poverty Action Reports (2020 – 21) highlight:

- 14,800<sup>3</sup> or 23.2% of Fife's children experience relative poverty. (Scottish average 20.8%)
- 19% of children in Fife are in absolute poverty. (Scottish average 16.5%)
- 12.3%<sup>4</sup> of workers earn below the Living Wage

Within Fife, child poverty remains highest in the Levenmouth, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, and Cowdenbeath areas, with some areas recording relative child poverty rates as high as 33.4%.

<sup>1</sup> Source [Fife-Census-2022-Infographic.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> Bywater et al 2022, [RelationshipBetweenPovertyChildAbuseandNeglect\\_Report.pdf](#) (hud.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup> ([Fife-Findings-Children-in-low-income-families-2022.pdf](#))

<sup>4</sup> ([Fifes-Economic-Strategy-2023-30-Evidence-Paper.pdf](#) (investfife.co.uk))

## Our Work

The Fife Child Protection Committee is a locally-based, inter-agency strategic partnership that spearheads the development of local inter-agency Child Protection Policy and Practice. The Committee collaborates with the Scottish Government and other partners nationally to implement Policy and Practice Developments.

The Committee is committed to promoting individual and collective leadership, recognising cross-cutting themes, and acknowledging the complexity of child protection work.

Improvements are driven through the Child Protection Improvement Plan and are monitored by the Committee. Our Annual Report is made widely available.

## Structure, Function and Overview



The Committee maintains a strategic perspective on child protection policies and procedures, providing quarterly reports to the Chief Officers of the Public Safety Group. In 2019, the Scottish Government released updated guidance outlining the responsibilities of Child Protection Committees and Chief Officers in 'Protecting Children and Young People', and we operate within this context.

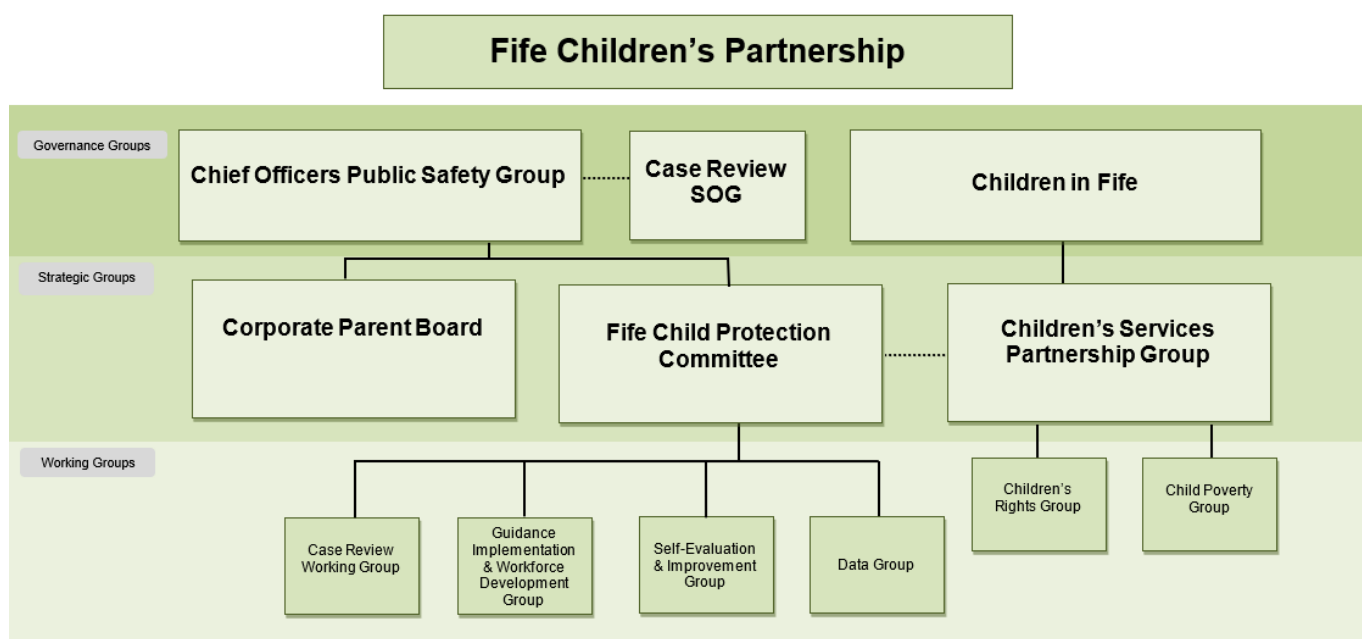


Fife CPC functions were already well established and are aligned to the functions the guidance supports in respect of:

- Continuous improvement, developing policies, procedures, and guidance
- Public information, engagement, and participation
- Data on Child Protection Services and Performance
- Quality Assurance and Self Evaluation
- Strategic planning and connections locally, regionally and nationally
- Annual reporting on the work of the CPC

The CPC met five times in the reporting period with two additional development days. Four permanent subgroups are tasked with delivering an appropriate work plan and report directly to the CPC.

The diagram in Appendix 2 shows the subgroup structure and more comprehensive governance structure in which the CPC currently operates.



A robust relationship is maintained between the Committee and the Fife Children's Services Partnership, solidified through the Fife Children's Services Plan (2022-2023). United in our aspiration of **'Making Fife a Place Where Every Child and Young Person Matters,'** both committees are committed to actualising this vision.

The Children's Services Plan, a cornerstone of our shared objectives, was formulated after comprehensive consultations with a diverse stakeholder group, encompassing children, young people, parents, carers, and staff. This collective input was pivotal in shaping the Plan's four priorities:

1. Delivering the Promise
2. Supporting Wellbeing
3. Closing the Equity Gap
4. Promoting Children's Rights

Aligned to the well-being indicators outlined in GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child), our overarching aim is to create environments where children and young people are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected, and included.

The Committee has a crucial role in achieving these aims along with the Children's Services Partnership, Chief Officers Group - Public Protection.

## Working Group Activity

The Working Groups met throughout the year. A brief synopsis of the group's contribution within the reporting period follows.

### CASE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The Case Review Working Group has been actively engaged in its responsibilities throughout the year. This group, representing Fife Child Protection Committee and acting on behalf of Chief Officers, is entrusted with the improvement work around Learning Reviews, both locally and nationally. The primary aim is to utilise the insights gained from Learning Reviews to promote best practices, enhance overall performance, and improve outcomes for children and young people. The group reports to each CPC.

#### Membership

- Detective Superintendent, Police Scotland. (Chair)
- Senior Manager, Children and Families, Social Work
- Senior Manager, Children's Services. Health And Social Care Partnership
- Lead Officer, Child Protection Committee.
- Lead Nurse Child Protection, NHS Fife Council
- Quality Improvement Officer, Education and Children Services
- Detective Chief Inspector, Public Protection Unit, Police Scotland
- Locality Reporter Manager, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- Lead Paediatrician, NHS Fife. (By exception)

During the reporting period, the group convened on seven occasions.

#### Key functions of the group include:

- To reflect, learn and improve child protection systems and practice when a child or young person has died, is significantly harmed or was at risk of death or significant harm or where effective practice has prevented harm or risk of harm.
- To provide a multi-agency forum to consider learning around both local and national Learning Reviews and make recommendations to the CPC on any improvement activity arising from these reviews.
- To link with Fife's Self Evaluation and Improvement Group and the Learning and Development activities and Risk Register for Child Protection
- To recommend improvement priorities to the CPC

The following achievements have been realised:

- Learning from Significant Case Reviews conducted nationwide has been carefully considered, with due attention to the unique context in Fife.
- The group has considered lessons from local referrals conducted throughout the year.
- The group have effectively maintained a unified, streamlined process for tracking and reporting on Learning Review action plans.
- The group has maintained active participation in the National Community of Practice for Learning Reviews.

### **Future Directions**

Looking ahead, the Case Review Working Group has outlined its forthcoming objectives:

- The National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews (2021) has been revised. The Case Review Working Group will draft local guidance for Fife to align local processes with the recent review.
- The group will continue to review local referrals.
- The group will continue to consider lessons learned from referrals out with Fife.

### **SELF-EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP**

The Self Evaluation and Improvement group operates under the Child Protection Committee's (CPC) guidance, serving as a crucial multi-agency forum. The group's core responsibilities align with the Scottish Government's Guidance on Protecting Children and Young People. The group provides a framework for quality assurance of the partnership's collective efficacy in child protection, aiming for continuous improvement. Directed by the CPC, the group focuses on predetermined self-evaluation themes to assess the partnership's impact on child protection. A shared approach to Quality Assurance (QA) activities is maintained, covering various thematic areas identified by the CPC. Regular updates are provided within the context of the Quality Assurance Framework, integrating analysis from the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection and the 2021 Child Protection National Guidance. The group ensures that key improvement actions are communicated with other strategic groups for better alignment.

The group met on five occasions during the year.

#### **Membership**

- Service Manager, Children and Family Social Work, Chair.
- Detective Inspector, Police Scotland.
- Third Sector Representative.
- Lead Nurse Child Protection, NHS Fife.
- Service Manager, Reviewing Service, Children and Families Social Work.
- Education Manager/Quality Improvement Officer, Education and Children Services.
- Lead Officer, Child Protection Committee.
- Housing Representative.
- Community and Neighbourhood Representative.

## **The following achievements have been realised.**

- We have revised the Terms of Reference for the Group, thereby streamlining its governance protocols.
- We have drafted a comprehensive work plan for 2022-2023, which includes multi-agency activities and facilitates the structured reporting of substantial self-evaluation activities by individual agencies during the relevant window.
- We have finalised and disseminated our audit report for the year 2021-2022, focusing on the re-registration of children included on the Child Protection Register within 12 months of deregistration.
- We have initiated a bespoke staff survey to gauge employee sentiments and operational efficiency.
- We have commissioned an activity to complete the Self Evaluation of Implementation of National Guidance commissioned by the Scottish Government.
- We have commenced work to bring our Data Group into the self-evaluation group.

## **What we will do next:**

- We will revise our Terms of Reference to account for incorporating the Data Group into the Self-Evaluation Group, based on a review confirming the benefits of integration due to their interrelationship.
- We will continue to work through the agreed self-evaluation calendar.

## **DATA GROUP**

The Data Group serves as a pivotal working group within Fife's Child Protection Committee (CPC), tasked with gathering, analysing, and scrutinising child protection data across multiple agencies. The group acts as a strategic arm of the CPC, informing self-evaluation activities and identifying avenues for improvement. The group is responsible for interpreting the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection in Fife and generating bi-annual reports for the CPC.

The overarching aim is to proactively identify trends, themes, and potential areas for improvement, thereby ensuring that services are effectively meeting the needs and improving the lives of children and young people at risk. The group also engages in benchmarking activities, assesses qualitative experiences, and contributes to Fife's quality assurance framework for child protection.

## **Membership**

- Senior Manager, Children and Families, Social Work.
- Inspector Police Scotland.
- Lead Nurse Child Protection, NHS Fife.
- Third Sector Representative.
- Quality Improvement Officer, Education and Children Services.
- Service Manager, Social Work.
- Housing Service Representative.
- Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA.
- Manager, Reviewing Service.

- Lead Officer, Child Protection Committee.
- Performance Improvement and Planning Officer, Social Work Resources

**The following achievements have been realised.**

- In June of 2022, CELCIS unveiled the second volume of the Minimum Dataset for Child Protection. This seminal work has been seamlessly integrated into our existing suite of performance metrics.
- Concurrently, we have augmented our framework with various bespoke local indicators, enriching our comprehension and governance in Child Protection.

**What we will do next**

- Over the past biennium, we have integrated the inaugural and subsequent iterations of the Minimum Data Set for Child Protection. In addition, we have augmented our data spectrum by incorporating bespoke local indicators, relating to household income and homelessness. Work is being progressed to consider additional indicators thereby enriching the scope and dimensionality of our performance metrics. Having established robust operational protocols, we are poised to dissolve the current group and amalgamate its functions into the Quality Assurance and Data Group.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In October 2022, a Workforce Development Lead Officer for Multi-Agency Training was appointed.

**What has been done:**

*Initial Task October – December 2022*

A Training Needs Analysis was carried out of the partnership to establish:

- What current single agency training was offered in the areas of Child Protection, Neglect and CSE.
- What single agencies would like to have on offer from a multi-agency training calendar.
- What contributions single agencies could make to the creation and delivery of the agreed calendar.

**January 2023**

The [Multi-Agency Child Protection Training Program](#) offered by Fife Council was designed to incorporate courses informed by individual agency feedback and insights gleaned from Interagency Learning Reviews.

Collaborative efforts, led by the Workforce Development Lead Officer and supported by representatives from Social Work, Health, Education, Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), and Housing have been instrumental in developing and delivering the training courses.

Courses have been run in:

- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection Multi-Agency Processes
- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Disability
- CPC Multi Agency Child Protection Return Home Welfare Interviews CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Parental Mental Health
- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Substance Use
- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection for Social Workers (and others) working with adults.

Evaluation for each course has been systematically conducted via Microsoft Forms.

Newly developed courses are now available and open for registration in the following areas:

- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Child Sexual Exploitation/Contextualised Safeguarding (F2F)
- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Preparation for Court (with SCRA) (F2F)
- CPC Multi-Agency Child Protection & Online Exploitation (Online)

#### **What we will do next:**

The CPC has commissioned a multi-agency Learning and Practice Development Group. This group will comprise of delegates from Police, Health, Social Work, Education, Housing, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Fife Violence Against Women Partnership and Community and Neighbourhoods. It will be led by a representative from the voluntary sector with support from the Learning and Development Lead Officer. Key initial tasks include formulating a Terms of Reference and developing a Learning and Practice Development Strategy for Fife.

#### **GUIDANCE IMPLEMENTATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

The enactment of the new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in 2021, effective from 6 September 2021, came with a designated 24-month implementation period. In alignment with this, the CPC (Child Protection Committee) reached a consensus to propose and execute changes in a phased manner. A comprehensive gap analysis was conducted to assess the implications of the new guidance on local processes and practices.

This self-evaluation exercise identified substantial changes outlined in the new guidance, which supersedes the 2014 version. Some of these changes have already been incorporated into our partnership's operations. A structured plan of action was devised to address the remaining changes, and active efforts are currently underway to facilitate these necessary developments.

The CPC maintains an ongoing vigilance over implementing the guidance and continues to assess its impact on performance. Furthermore, it evaluates how alterations to strategy and practice enhance outcomes for children and young people.

## SCOTTISH CHILD INTERVIEW MODEL

### First-Year Implementation 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022

In 2017, Scotland launched the National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project to modernise the process of interviewing child victims and witnesses. This led to the development of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM). Fife joined the national training program in 2021, with the first SCIM interviews conducted on 25 October 2021.

Before SCIM's introduction, Fife had an established partnership between Police and Social Work for joint investigative interviews. Both agencies had dedicated teams trained using the existing Stepwise model. Joint interviews were standard practice, with each agency leading about half of the interviews.

Initial training was completed by three Social Workers and three Police Officers between August and October 2021. There was then some movement of staff, which created a shortage of SCIM-trained Social Workers, which initially impacted the program's capacity. Further training commenced in April 2022 to redress this imbalance and to align resources more evenly between the two agencies.

A total of 398 interviews were conducted during the reporting period. Of those, 238 were conducted using the Scottish Child Interview Model, while 160 used the Stepwise model.

Children told us:

- They were largely happy with how things were explained to them.
- Children were mainly content with where interviews took place, particularly the designated interview facilities.
- Children overwhelmingly reported feeling listened to and spoke positively about the interview teams.
- They thought they were afforded the time and space they needed during the interview.

Parents told us:

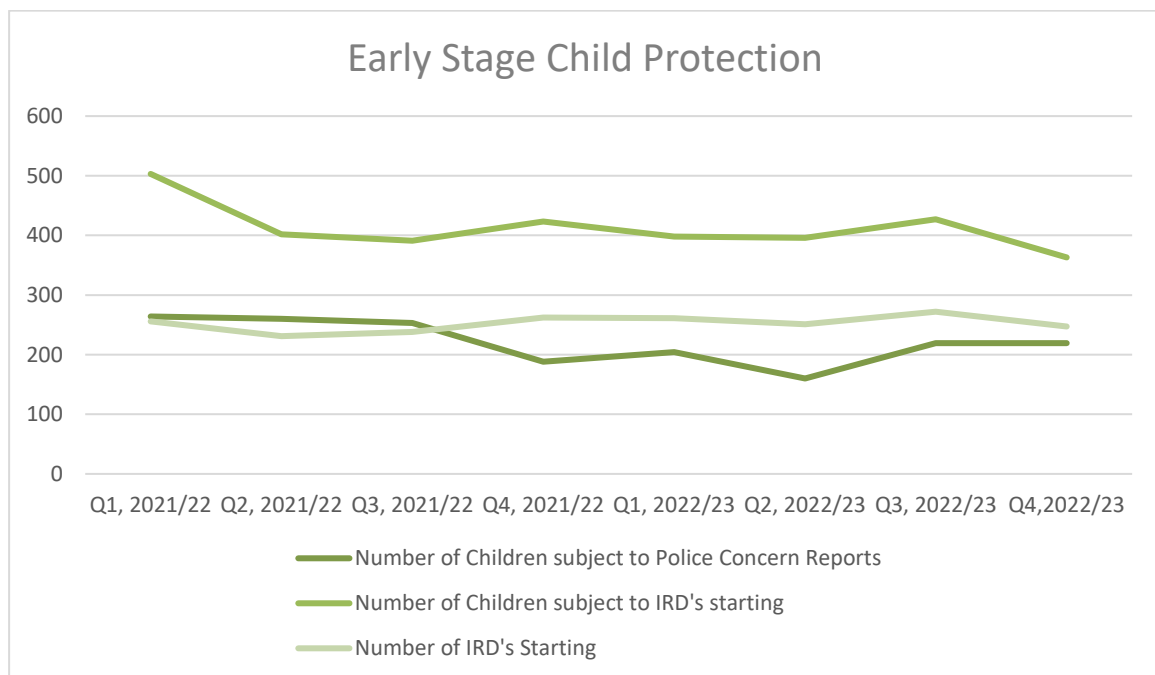
- They felt that their child was listened to, and they felt listened to.
- They felt a greater understanding of the process, felt more involved and better able to support their child.
- Sometimes, the immediate and longer-term impact on parents can differ from the impact on the child.

### Next steps

- Full implementation of SCIM as the sole model of joint investigative interviewing in Fife.
- Evaluation of interviews will help inform practice development.
- Identification of additional appropriate interview venues across Fife.
- Utilising resources, we have to improve support for families.
- Consider how we secure feedback from children and families regarding their experience of the whole process.
- Explore thoughts, understanding and considerations around Barnahus in Fife.

## Key Statistics

In the following Appendix, we present detailed charts that are extracted from the Minimum Data Sets for Child Protection, as revised by CELCIS in June 2022, our national benchmarking and our bespoke local indicators. These datasets serve as crucial instruments for monitoring and evaluation and are an integral part of our performance metrics suite. Their inclusion here aims to provide a robust, multi-faceted view of our activities and effectiveness in the realm of Child Protection. We believe that these metrics, alongside our local indicators, collectively enhance our understanding, governance, and overall strategy in ensuring the safety and well-being of children.



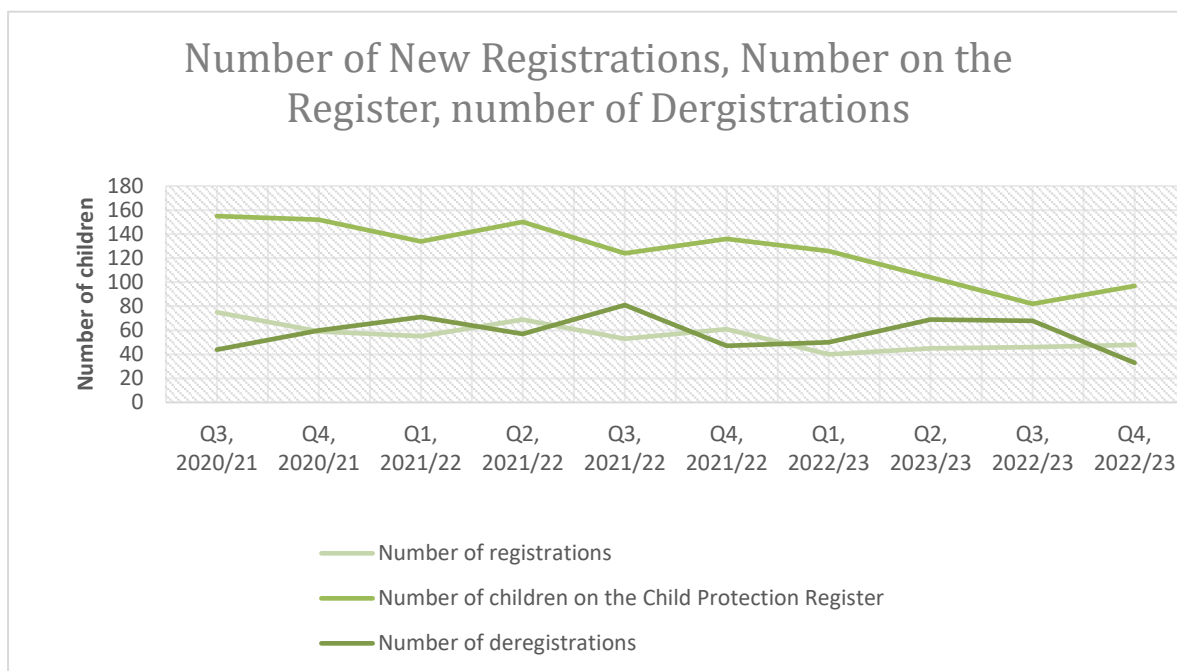
### Key Messages

- The number of children subject to an IRD starting has remained constant over a number of years.



## Concerns recorded at Child Protection Case Conferences

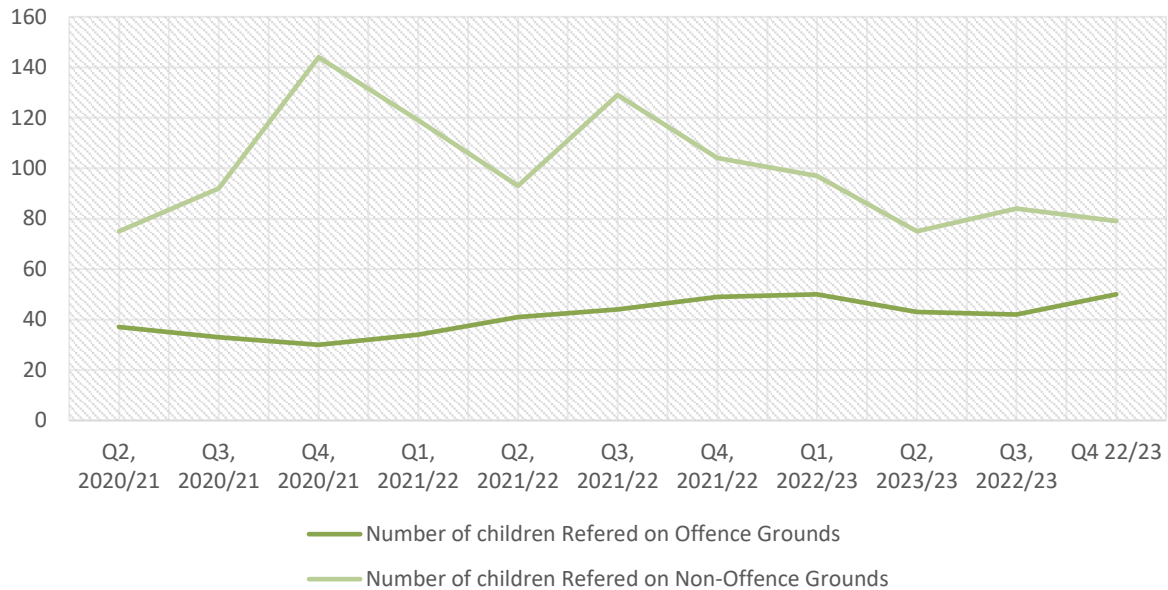
In the last 12 months, a range of concerns have been recorded as the impact or likely impact on a child, with risk factors of parental mental health problems and parental substance misuse and neglect most frequently recorded as the issues most often raising concern.



## Key Messages

- There has been a steady decline in children on the Child Protection Register over the preceding 24 months. This is consistent with the national trend.

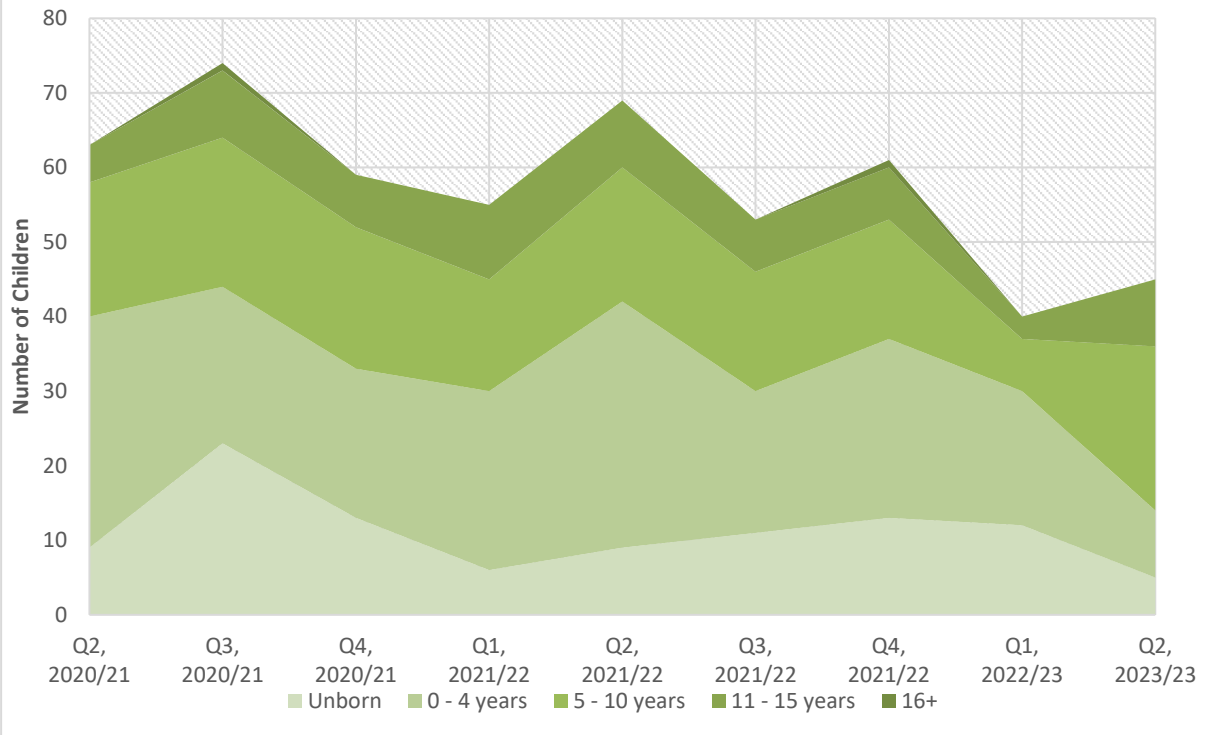
## Number of Children Referred to the Reporter



### Key Messages

- The number of children referred to the Reporter on Offence Grounds has remained fairly consistent. Early and effective intervention is well embedded in Fife ensuring that diversion is used appropriately and consistently.
- The decrease in referrals for non-offence grounds correlates with the decrease seen in the number of children on the child protection register and the decrease in re-registrations. This is also reflected in a decrease in the number of children subject to compulsory supervision orders. The high number of referrals in Q3 21/22 has stabilised in this reporting period, reflecting work undertaken by SCRA with partners to ensure referrals are being appropriately made.

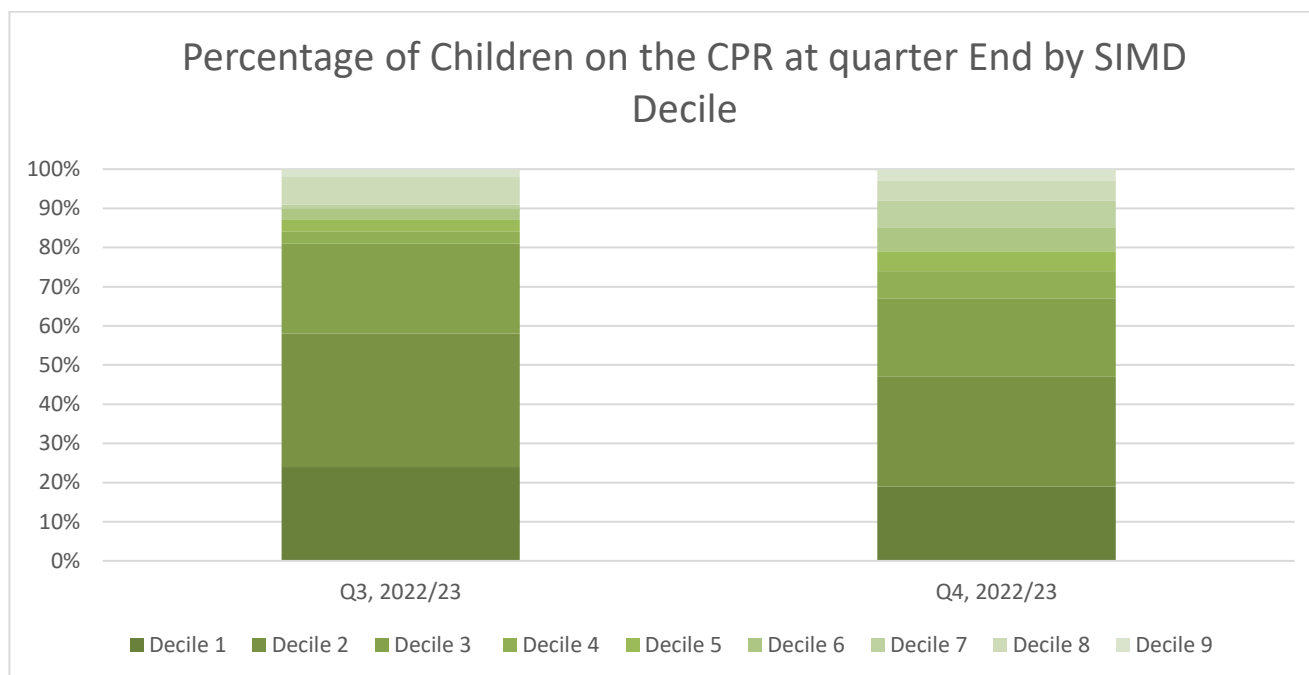
## Characteristics Of Our Vulnerable Children and Young People



### Key Messages

- The majority of children placed on the Child Protection Register are under 11 years of age, although there has been a recent increase in children aged 5-10 years of age.

## Local Indicators



## Key Messages

- Children on the Child Protection Register are disproportionately represented in Decile 1,2 and 3. These deciles represent a relative measure of deprivation across Scotland and account for the three most deprived measures within the SIMD framework.

## Priority Areas for Development

The Committee, through self-evaluation and learning, has identified several priority areas for development in the next year. These will form part of the refreshed improvement plan.

- Implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection 2021.
- Implementation of the National Guidance for Learning Reviews 2021.
- Increased capacity around multi-agency child protection training.
- A focus on Neglect
- Poverty
- The commission and delivery of a Contextual Safeguarding Model
  - CSE
- Engagement and Voice of the Child/Community Engagement and Communications

## Enquiries

Please contact the Lead Officer: Child Protection Committee for further information or enquiries regarding this report.

**Fife Child Protection Committee**

Email: [CPC@fife.gov.uk](mailto:CPC@fife.gov.uk)